

## 12. SIGHTING OF WHITEBROWED BLUE FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA SUPERCILIARIS* IN SILENT VALLEY, KERALA

The whitebrowed blue flycatcher (*Muscicapa superciliaris*) is a small bird that breeds in the Western Himalayas between 1800 and 3200 m (Ali and Ripley 1987). Its breeding range extends from Kohat in Pakistan to the north-eastern hill states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh in India.

The bird winters in central India, occupying areas from Delhi down to southeast Karnataka and northwest Andhra Pradesh, covering northern Maharashtra, Orissa, Bengal and Bihar (Ripley 1982, Ali and Ripley 1987). Recently, it has been sighted at Shareneswar in Sabarkantha, Gujarat (Khacher 1996). This implies that there is no record of the bird migrating to the Western Ghats region. There is no report of its occurring further south than southeast Karnataka. It is not recorded so far from Kerala (Ali 1969, Ali and Ripley 1987, Neelakantan 1996, Neelakantan *et al.* 1993).

On March 5, 1997, while monitoring frugivorous birds in Silent Valley as part of a project on keystone species, a bird with striking colouring (blue upperparts with prominent white eyebrow extending to the nape and white underparts with prominent greyish band broken by white on the breast) was seen by the first

author. The bird was sitting in the middle storey canopy of a *Mallotus philippensis* tree located in the ecotone region of an evergreen patch at Sirandhri in Silent Valley. It sat at a safe distance from a seemingly related species, the rufous tailed flycatcher (*Muscicapa ruficauda*), which is common in the area. It moved from branch to branch at the time of observation, possibly in search of insects. It was seen for only five minutes, and then it flew away. Later study confirmed the identity of the bird as a male whitebrowed blue flycatcher (*Muscicapa superciliaris*). This species was not sighted again in Silent Valley until May 1997.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank WWF-India, New Delhi, for financial assistance.

August 25, 1997

B. AJAYAKUMAR  
T.S. NAYAR

*Division of Conservation Biology  
Tropical Botanic Garden and  
Research Institute  
Palode, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 562,  
Kerala.*

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## 13. BLACKNAPED BLUE FLYCATCHER *HYPOTHYMIS AZUREA* TRAPPED IN THE WEB OF THE GIANT WOOD SPIDER *NEPHILA MACULATA*

In October 1996, I had gone birdwatching to the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP)

situated in Mumbai. I was observing a mixed hunting party of brown flycatcher *Muscicapa*